

So wherein lies the true source of religious extremism—in religion or in dictatorship which pushes people towards violence? The answer is self-evident. Leaders of some CIS regimes find it useful to have a few extremist Islamic groups handy to frighten the West.

They tell you: "Only dictatorship can stop Islamic terror. If you do not support me, your oil pipelines will suffer". This is a lie. This is a total reversal of cause and effect. The longer dictatorial clan-based regimes remain in power, the greater will the influence of religious fanatics become, and the more blood will be spilled eventually.

For Kazakhstan the threat of national and religious extremism is especially great. In our country there are as many Kazakhs as non-Kazakhs, as many Muslims as there are Orthodox Christians. If the danger of religious extremism arises in the predominantly Kazakh south, the Russian population which is concentrated in the north will turn to Russia for aid. The oil-rich western part of the country will proclaim its own interests. In that case the "balkanization" of Kazakhstan will become inevitable.

It pains me to say all this. I am asking you to help my country avoid this fate. There is no other way to achieve this than to help the people of Kazakhstan to secure those freedoms which were initially promised by the Constitution but which were then stolen: the freedom of speech, the freedom of forming political organizations, the freedom to choose one's representatives in the governing bodies. And, I beg, do not help dictators stay in power.

Our world stands on the threshold of a new millennium. There is a saying: "As you greet the New Year, so will you live in it". If this is true, then equally true would be the conclusion that "as you greet a new century, so will you live in it", or "as you greet a new millennium, so will you live in it". During most of the first millennium of the new era East and West existed apart from each other. During the second millennium they fought a great deal. Let us live the third millennium in peace, justice and prosperity.

I thank you for your interest in my country, Kazakhstan, and its people.

NATIONAL EXILE WARNS OF EXTREMIST THREAT IN KAZAKHSTAN

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(By Joe Frolik)

A Kazakhstani dissident leader in exile since April warns that his resource-rich homeland could fall prey to religious or nationalist extremists if the current regime continues to resist democratic reforms.

Akezhan Kazhegeldin told a City Club of Cleveland audience yesterday that United States and other democratic countries should continue pressing the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan to hold open elections, to allow a free press and to permit political dissent.

"When the average person sees that he or she cannot change anything, they become desperate and ready to do anything," said Kazhegeldin, Kazakhstan's Prime Minister before he broke with President Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1997. "It pains me to say all this. I am asking you to help my country avoid this fate."

Nazarbaev was Kazakhstan's communist boss at the end of the Soviet Union and became president of the newly independent republic. He has concentrated economic and political power in family members and sponsored a series of elections that have been criticized by outside observers, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Last year, Nazarbaev suddenly moved the date of the next presidential election ahead two years.

Then his election commission disqualified Kazhegeldin, who most Western observers consider the country's most popular opposition figure. The reason: He had delivered a speech to an "unauthorized" group—Kazakhstanis for Free Elections. Kazhegeldin also was barred from last month's parliamentary ballot, though by then he had fled to Moscow and then London after being shot at and accused of corruption and money laundering.

He has denied the charges.

Nazarbaev himself is widely suspected of having profited from power.

The Guardian newspaper last year reported that he was the eighth wealthiest person in the world.

Kazakhstan covers 1 million square miles of Central Asia and borders both Russia and China.

It is believed to contain the world's largest untapped pool of oil, as well as large deposits of gold and titanium.

But unemployment is high and the average annual income is less than \$1,300, according to the State Department.

Foreign investors are afraid to set up shop in Kazakhstan, Kazhegeldin said, because of an unreliable legal system.●

RECOGNITION OF ANNE SWANT'S AP BIOLOGY CLASS IN WALLA WALLA

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, in November I had the pleasure of joining a unique group of students on a field trip to Coppei Creek outside of Walla Walla, Washington. The Advanced Placement biology class from Walla Walla high school, led by their teacher Anne Swant, has been engaged in an innovative program to study wild steelhead restoration and monitor water quality.

The Coppei Creek project is a collaboration between the Walla Walla conservation district, Tri-State Steelheaders, City of Waitsburg, and local landowners. This group came together after severe flooding damaged property and habitat in 1996. Their goal was to restore stream habitat for threatened steelhead while providing necessary flood control for adjacent farmlands.

As part of the "Four Schools" project Anne Swant's class has teamed up with John Geidl, a retired educator and executive secretary of Tri-State Steelheaders, to institute a "classrooms in the stream" project—teaching biology and scientific research techniques through real-life applications.

In addition to the work at Coppei Creek, the students helped design and construct in-stream habitat and riparian buffers for a fish-bearing stream on their own school campus.

For their leadership in this revolutionary program, I was proud to award Anne Swant and John Geidl one of my "Innovation in Education" awards for excellence and creativity in hands-on science learning and leadership in teaching community conservation.

This program, and the Coppei Creek restoration project are models of lo-

cally-driven conservation and education initiatives. This community has taken it upon itself, without unnecessary pressure from Washington DC bureaucrats, to engage in salmon habitat restoration and use it as an educational experience for future stewards of this precious resource.

Clearly, a good education in today's world requires much more than just solid academic instruction—it must also include a broader understanding of the application of those skills learned in the classroom. The Four Schools Project is an excellent example of this principle in action. I propose to my colleagues here in the Senate that this successful project is further proof that local educators will be able to make the best decisions about the unique needs of their students.●

THE WATCHDOGS PROGRAM

● Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise today to commend a special program that is having a positive impact on schools throughout my home State of Arkansas. This program is called WatchDOGS, and was founded to combat school violence in the wake of the Jonesboro tragedy by Jim Moore, PTA President of Gene George Elementary School in Sprindgale, Arkansas. Jim has informed me that the program has rapidly expanded to about 35 schools and I share in his goal of seeing it implemented in schools throughout the State of Arkansas. Furthermore, it is my hope that this program will be implemented in schools throughout the nation.

In a WatchDOGS program, fathers and grandfathers of students volunteer to spend at least one day a year in their child's school. By doing so, they not only provide unobtrusive security, but they also serve as positive role models for the children. Each school has a WatchDOGS coordinator who schedules the shifts to ensure that there is a father or grandfather on the premises at all times. WatchDOGS participate in a wide variety of school activities. For example, they read to and tutor students, participate in playground activities, eat lunch with students, and assist in the loading and unloading of school buses.

I believe that this program can be a great tool in our efforts to prevent school violence and to improve student performance because it increase parental initiative and involvement in their children's education. It can often be implemented without any expenditure of school funds as the only supplies necessary are a pair of walkie-talkies and identifying t-shirts, which are usually donated by local merchants or the PTA.

I hope that my colleagues will ask the school superintendents and principals in their respective home states to consider implementing this program in their schools. Finally, I wish to thank Jim Moore, Gene George Elementary School Principal Jim Lewis,